

Summer of Bugs



THE ACADEMY
OF NATURAL SCIENCES
of DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Valley Forge National Historical Park

Summer of Bugs at Valley Forge National Historical Park FAQs

What is the Summer of Bugs?

The Summer of Bugs is a hands-on discovery project designed to engage visitors in fun, learning, and park research. In partnership with the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, the Summer of Bugs will start and end with BioBlitz events that are open for public participation, and feature summer-long insect inventories and a PhotoBlitz. The goals of the Summer of Bugs include offering opportunities for the public to learn about biodiversity and participate in and contribute to park research as well as developing insect species lists for the park.

What is a BioBlitz?

A BioBlitz is an inventory of all species observed in an area during a 24-hour period. The BioBlitz in Valley Forge NHP will focus on terrestrial insects and attempt to identify as many insects as possible between noon on day one and noon on day two. The park has scheduled two insect BioBlitzes - May 30-31 and August 23-24 - and both will be based in the Education Center adjacent to the Visitor Center.

During the May 30-31 BioBlitz, the public is invited to explore base camp (in the Education Center), ask the scientists questions, and participate in a macrophotography workshop. During the August 23-24 BioBlitz, participants will also have the opportunity to go out into the field with researchers and to assist with sorting specimens at base camp. Please note that field activities during the August BioBlitz require advance registration. Details for both BioBlitzes are posted on the park website at <http://bit.ly/summerofbugs>.

What is the PhotoBlitz on iNaturalist.org?

The PhotoBlitz will allow visitors to share insect observations throughout the summer and contribute to the species list for the park. To participate, visit iNaturalist.org and search 'Summer of Bugs' under the 'Projects' header. There you can upload your insect photographs and tell us about when and where you saw the insect. Experts at the Academy of Natural Sciences will help identify your insect (as best as possible) and add your observations to our species inventory. In a special workshop held during the May BioBlitz, you can learn about and practice macrophotography on your camera or smartphone. An iNaturalist Quick Guide is available on the park website at <http://bit.ly/summerofbugs>.



Why is Valley Forge NHP interested in insects?

Through the years, the park has researched and developed inventories for most of the plant and animal species that live here. Terrestrial invertebrates (such as insects, mollusks, worms, etc.) represent the last major data gap in park resource inventories, and insects are the largest group of animals included under terrestrial invertebrates. Insects are an essential part of the park ecosystems, performing important functions like pollination, as well as serving as food sources for a wide variety of other wildlife species. The Summer of Bugs will help document insect fauna as a start toward an invertebrate inventory and will provide valuable information about existing biodiversity in a variety of park habitats, like tall grass meadows.

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I don't know much about bugs; can I still participate?

Yes! If you are interested in learning about insects, the scientific process, or macro-photography, you qualify!

The Summer of Bugs is a citizen science program and people of all experience levels are invited and welcome to participate.

Is there a cost?

All activities during the Summer of Bugs are free of charge.

Some activities during the August BioBlitz require advance registration; see the park website for details <http://bit.ly/summerofbugs>.

Is there an age limit for activities?

There is no age limit for activities; however children under 18 must have parental consent to participate in BioBlitz field work and children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Field work will involve walking long distances and surveying for insects in often hot, full sun conditions. Participants should consider their physical limitations prior to signing up for field work.

The Bio Blitzes and PhotoBlitz will also include easy activities for families and others to learn about insect diversity in the park and to follow along with the discoveries in base camp.

Do I need to be able to identify the insect if I submit a picture for the PhotoBlitz?

You do not need to know the name of the insects you submit on iNaturalist.org but your photograph must be clear so researchers can identify it. Simply click the "ID Please" button and experts will assist with identification of your photo. You may be contacted through your iNaturalist account by a researcher if they have questions about the photograph or the insect location.

Do I have to visit the park to participate in the Summer of Bugs?

You can participate from wherever you happen to be. The Summer of Bugs will be featured on a variety of park social media outlets including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Interested participants can follow along using #SummerofBugs and can even live chat with scientists during the two BioBlitz events.

[Facebook.com/ValleyForgeNHP](https://www.facebook.com/ValleyForgeNHP)

[Twitter @ValleyForgeNHP](https://twitter.com/ValleyForgeNHP)

[Instagram @ValleyForgeNHP](https://www.instagram.com/ValleyForgeNHP)

How can I sign up or get more information?

Visit the park website for more information or contact Amy Ruhe, Biologist, to sign up:

610-783-1036

amy_ruhe@nps.gov

